

RemarksAmendments to the Claims

The claims have been amended, as indicated above. The amendment to the indicated claim has been presented in accordance with the proposed revisions to 37 C.F.R. §1.121 as set forth in 1267 OG 106 (25 February 2003). No new matter has been introduced through the amending of the claims.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C § 112, first paragraph

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, because the best mode contemplated by the inventor has not been disclosed. The Applicant strongly traverses this baseless rejection. A careful reading of the specification of the present invention, particularly pages 1, 2, 4 and 5, provides sufficient understanding to one skilled in the art of mobile input/output bins (MIOBs) regarding the operation of the MIOBs in the present invention.

As discussed in the specification, it is known to employ a variety of mobile vehicles. See, for example, the previously cited Haba et.al. and Fox references. Clearly, the mobile vehicles disclosed in the Haba et.al. and Fox references, along with other such readily available references, would provide enough information to one skilled in the art about structural features of the MIOB, such as wheels, chains, or rails, which may be used as part of the drive mechanism of the MIOB of the present invention. Also, the Haba et.al. and Fox references, along with other such readily available references, would clearly provide enough detail to one skilled in the art on how the MIOB of the present invention would move on its own. It must be pointed out that the Applicant is not claiming to have invented the MIOB. Instead, one of the novel features of the present invention is the use of a MIOB to detect an input/output job at the consumable handling device, reading a machine-readable data located on an input/output job cover page means by the MIOB, and determining the owner of the input/output job through the use of the MIOB.

With respect to the scanning/reading means claimed in the present invention, again, a careful reading of the specification of the present invention would provide sufficient understanding to one skilled in the art of MIOBs regarding this feature. As discussed in the specification, it is known to employ a

mobile carrier that can read/scan an article. See, for example, the previously cited Huang et.al. reference and the Coutant et.al. references, which were cited by the Examiner. Clearly, one skilled in the art of MIOBs would be able to easily equip the MIOB with a scanning/reading means that is capable of scanning/reading the article. Again, it must be pointed out that the Applicant is not claiming to have invented a MIOB that is capable of scanning/reading an article. Instead, another novel feature of the present invention is the use of the MIOB to scan/read machine-readable data located on an input/output job cover page means in order to determine the owner of the input/output job. Therefore, the Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 2, 9, and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 (a) as being unpatentable over Coutant et.al. The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. The Applicant would like to note that there are two Coutant et.al. references cited by the Examiner, but the exact Coutant et.al. reference used in the rejection was not adequately set forth. Therefore, both Coutant et.al. references will collectively be referred to as (Coutant et.al.) and discussed herein. However, the Applicant avers that either or both of the Coutant et.al. references could be applied and still not anticipate the claimed subject matter of the present invention.

Claim 1 presently recites a method for automated input/output job distribution, comprising the steps of: detecting an input/output job at a consumable handling device; reading a machine readable data located on an input/output job cover page means by a self-propelled, mobile input/output bin; and determining an owner of the input/output job through the use of the bin.

It must be pointed to the Examiner that in order for an anticipation rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 to stand, the reference must show each and every feature of the claimed invention. Clearly, Coutant et.al. fail to teach, suggest or even appreciate each and every feature of the present invention, as claimed. While Coutant et.al. disclose systems for sorting articles, these references do not teach, suggest or even appreciate, among other things, detecting an input/output job at a consumable handling device, reading a machine readable data located on an input/output job cover page means by a

self-propelled, mobile input/output bin, and determining an owner of the input/output job through the use of th bin. In fact, Coutant et.al. is silent with respect to detecting an input/output job at a consumable handling device. Even if one gives the benefit of the doubt and agrees that the article sorting station may be considered a consumable device, which the Applicant denies, the article sorting station of Coutant et.al. does not detect an input/output job at the consumable handling device. Also, the trays of Coutant et.al., which may liberally be considered as MIOBs, do not read a machine readable data located on an input/output job cover page. Instead, the trays of Coutant et al. read/scan a code on the article. Finally, the trays of Coutant et.al. read/scan the code on the article so that the article can be transported to its proper location. This is not analogous to reading/scanning a cover page of an input/output job to determine the owner of the input/output job.

With respect to dependent claims 2-8, due to the fact that these dependent claims are dependent upon independent Claim 1 and the art of record does not anticipate and/or render obvious the subject matter of Claim 1, the Applicant contends that these dependent claims are also allowable over the art of record.

With respect to independent Claim 9, as discussed above, Coutant et.al. does not teach, suggest or even appreciate, among other things, a method for passively automating an input/output job distribution, comprising the steps of: detecting an input/output job at a consumable handling device; contacting a self-propelled, mobile input/output bin; and sending said bin to said consumable handling device to read a machine readable data located on a job cover page means in order to transfer said job to an owner of said job through the use of said bin. In fact, Coutant et.al. is silent with respect to detecting an input/output job and sending the MIOB to the consumable handling device to read the data on the cover page of the input/output job in order to transport the input/output job to its owner.

With respect to dependent claims 10-14, due to the fact that these dependent claims are dependent upon independent Claim 9 and the art of record does not anticipate and/or render obvious the subject matter of Claim 9, the Applicant contends that these dependent claims are also allowable over the art of record.

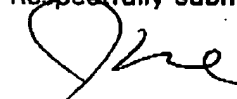
With respect to independent Claim 15, as discussed above, Coutant et.al. does not teach, suggest or even appreciate, among other things, a method for actively automating an input/output job distribution, comprising the steps of: scanning/monitoring a consumable handling device by a self-propelled, mobile input/output bin; detecting an input/output job at said consumable handling device by said bin; and determining an owner of said job by reading machine readable data located on a cover page means of said job through the use of said bin. In fact, Coutant et.al. is silent with respect to scanning/monitoring a consumable handling device to detect an input/output job and reading the data on the cover page of the input/output job in order to transport the input/output job to its owner.

With respect to dependent claims 16-20, due to the fact that these dependent claims are dependent upon independent Claim 15 and the art of record does not anticipate and/or render obvious the subject matter of Claim 15, the Applicant contends that these dependent claims are also allowable over the art of record. Therefore, the Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

With respect to the art of record cited by the Examiner, but not applied in the Response, the Applicant contends that this unapplied art does not anticipate and/or render obvious the claimed subject matter of the present invention.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that this case is in condition for allowance and now may be passed to issue forth with. A holding to this effect is respectfully requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this patent application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney during normal Mountain Time Zone business hours.

Respectfully submitted,



James R. McDaniel
Reg. No. 34,481

Date: 11/10/03
Phone: (208) 396-34095
Fax: (208) 396-3958